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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: POTUS VISITS, CUBA, SOUTH AFRICA, PENTAGON,  
PERU, GITMO, NUKES

- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary
- [1](#)2. Obama Visit to Turkey
- [1](#)3. Obama Visit Wrap Up
- [1](#)4. Obama Visit to Iraq
- [1](#)5. US Congressional Delegation in Cuba
- [1](#)6. Secretary Gates on Pentagon Budget
- [1](#)7. South Africa
- [1](#)8. Fujimori Trial in Peru
- [1](#)9. Guantanamo
- [1](#)10. Nuclear Weapons in Germany

- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary

Editorials focused on the Obama visit to Europe and Iraq and on the decline of the baby boomlet in Germany. The papers focused on a wide range of headlines ranging from the extension of the junk car bonus to reports that doctors assisted in CIA interrogations that are being characterized by ICRC as torture. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast Heute and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with reports on the aftermath of the earthquake in Italy.

- [1](#)2. Obama Visit To Turkey

In a front-page editorial Frankfurter Allgemeine remarks: "Those in the Islamic world who are interested in closer relations to the western world have particularly waited for the promise of a new beginning out of the mouth of an American President. Barack Obama might have wanted to strengthen those who are under attack because of their close relations to America, by his announcement to create a new relationship between the U.S. and the Muslim world.... Of course, America does not lead a war against Islam, not in Afghanistan and not in Iraq. The fact that Obama stated in the Turkish parliament this obvious thing shows how bad America's relations to the Islamic world are. Arab regimes remained closely connected to the Bush government. However, they were annoyed about its policies on Israel, the Iraq war, and the democracy propaganda. The people in the streets were also outraged about it. Obama wants to repair this damaged relationship.... How many concessions will Obama actually make to Muslims without becoming subservient? There will not be a radical change in America's policy on Israel.... Does he want to make Turkey's EU membership the most important criteria for the western-Islamic relations? ... There are common interests

and there are differences between the West and the Islamic world, which are based in their societies. However, a dialogue with Jihadists and Islamists who hate America will not work."

Sueddeutsche comments: "American President Obama buried his predecessor's unfortunate idea of an unlimited world war against Islamist terrorism. He assured all Muslims in the world during his speech in Turkey that the U.S. would never be the enemy of Islam.... George Bush and his willing European partners stirred up many bad feelings. It will not be easy to overcome this legacy, also because those in power and the underdogs do not naturally share interests. A peaceful coexistence for all sides involved, as during the Cold War, is a reachable first goal. To get there, Western opinion leaders should know what not to do: It is absolutely wrong to force moderate groups in the Islamic world to close ranks with fundamentalists by acting arrogantly and criticizing everybody across the board. Also Muslims who are unsatisfied with their religious leaders do not like moralizing undertones.... An American President whose middle name is Hussein has an advantage here."

Nuernberger Zeitung commented: "In Ankara, Obama suggested that his support for a united Europe might not have been meant so seriously because the emphatic demand that the EU must accept Turkey as a member would disintegrate the EU. It also shows that Obama was, in this respect, not somebody who wanted to learn something, but who believed to know it better, like his predecessor."

### 13. Obama Visit Wrap Up

ZDF-TV's Heute-Journal notes: "Obama demonstrated one thing during the recent diplomatic marathon: America wants to accept the rules of the game again. Sobriety instead of arrogance.... The price for the partners is that they will be expected to share more of the burden."

Frankfurter Allgemeine noted that after President Obama's first trip that "Americans and Europeans have a clearer understanding of each other," and added: "The audience liked Barack Obama's debut in the world, although there were also some weary and critical voices. The most interesting detail of the tour was probably the fact that, on the one side, Obama presented himself as the representative of a country that no longer is a superpower with a surplus of tools, but on the other hand, America is still expected to lead. This marks a turning point and a period of transition. Now players will come up and take over important new roles."

Weekly Die Zeit carried a front-page editorial and wrote: "[During these summits], global images were shaken. First of all, the one in which the United States was the center of attention. The president's new humility coincided with a confession that no one had ever thought the U.S. president could have made a year ago. Barack Obama assumed responsibility for the dropping of bombs over Nagasaki and Hiroshima and for the current financial crisis. With such a president the second image is crumbling, too: the one of America as the Great Satan, the nation that causes everything evil and leaves aside good things. Everyone, ranging from Ahmadinejad to the militant NATO opponents, must now learn to live in a world without their beloved enemy image.... The leaders who have gathered in various constellations at the summit meetings do not comprise a global government but they weaved a kind of global leadership network. And we owe this primarily to Barack Obama, because he has begun to overcome the previous leadership style of the Americans....

The U.S. president does not lead the world--he defines the situation, he sets standards and no longer ambiguous ones. The Obama world that has surfaced over the past few days is certainly not yet a better one, but it is a more honest one. Obama has now laid his fate into the hands of the world. We could obstruct his policies now because we are strong and free, but hopefully not as stupid."

Under the headline: "Messiahs with empty hands," FT Deutschland commented: "And so it came to pass that Barack Hussein Obama visited Europe. In London he rescued the global economy. He cured NATO in Strasbourg. In Prague he freed the world of nuclear weapons. In Ankara he reconciled Islam with the West. On the seventh day he entered Air Force One and disappeared in the cloudless sky. Was this just a dream? I'm afraid it was. However, the first European

tour of the new U.S. President was indeed a triumph... While he presented himself in a relaxed way, he also demonstrated the instinct to take bold action, which European politicians seem to lack.... Obama confirmed the impression that he is an unusually talented and intelligent politician. But this does not mean that he will be successful."

Handelsblatt dealt with the G-20 summit and its commitment to free trade and opined: "During their summit meeting in London, the 20 most powerful nations in the world put on a brave face to the game they are playing behind the backs of their populations. It is true that the G-20 committed itself to forgoing any kind of protectionist measures by the end of 2010, but skepticism is appropriate. During the first financial summit in Washington, the G-20 promised to forego plans to seal off their economies. The paper on the previous declaration had hardly dried, when the first participants pulled up their drawbridges. Their commitments to free trade can be taken seriously only if the G-20 decides to lower their drawbridges again and reduce their efforts to build new trade barriers. The real test, however, would be a successful conclusion of the Doha Round, where we do not even have empty promises. Compared to the Washington meeting, the G-20 fell back to its previous statements and even left open the time for a conclusion of the global trade round."

Regional daily Mittelbayerische Zeitung of Regensburg argued: "President Obama said that it takes time to turn the "oil tanker" of state. This may be a nice metaphor, but it is also an anticipated apology, for the question to which he gave the answer was: Will U.S. politics really change under President Obama? And this question is more than justified. Thus far, Obama has done only one thing: he is selling hopes."

Regional daily Lausitzer Rundschau of Cottbus had this to say: "Obama's trip was a European oath of manifestation. After all the years of complaints and abuses about the problems the United States had piled up and continued to deepen, the curtain was raised for a new beginning everyone was longing for. But the necessary ensemble forgot about the text. Afghanistan has always been the good, right war from which the Iraq war only distracted attention. Now when Obama is making this slogan his own, the conflict is turning into a difficult matter. But Europe did not present its own new ideas. Relations with Turkey were and continue to be considered a European problem. Now a U.S. president is necessary to avoid a fiasco. European answers to the economic crisis were equally meager."

Abendzeitung of Munich opined, "Barack Obama is probably the best thing that could have happened to the world during these times. No he is not one who will save the world, but the aspect that creates hope is the way the new U.S. leader addresses problems--with dialogue, cooperation and friendly modesty. Compared to the dull cowboy before him every inhabitant on this planet would have been better. But Obama represents something like a turnabout in the activities of the United States."

Koelnische Rundschau of Cologne argued: "The White House is satisfied and can be satisfied. President Obama may not have asserted all his notions during his European trip...but he has achieved one thing: a fundamental change of mood towards his country. His predecessor George W. Bush managed to raise opposition of almost the whole world of his dull global power policy, but the charming, educated, competent and charismatic Barack Obama seems to have succeeded in eleven weeks in reviving the image of the United States: to lead by example and be willing to cooperate instead of demonstrating a know-it-all attitude. But he must now match his words with deeds."

Regional daily Badische Zeitung of Freiburg judged: "It is true that for a President who likes to act in such multilateral rounds as Barack Obama, there may be a suspicion that he does not defend U.S. interests resolutely enough. But this time reflexes are different. The United States needs the world as it did not need it in the past. It needs the Chinese who buy their bonds; it needs the Europeans for a joint strategy in Afghanistan. The combination of misguided unilateral moves of the Bush era and the new constraints as a consequence of the financial crisis has almost resulted in a kind of humility."

#### 14. Obama Visit to Iraq

ARD-TV's Tagesthemen interpreted Obama's stopover in Iraq as a "signal that he will keep his election promise of withdrawing the troops."

ZDF-TV's Heute-Journal remarked: "The American President has done something in Bagdad which he so far avoided: posing as the commander in chief of the by far most powerful military force in the world. However, this was not the Bush-style of showing power. It was first of all a gesture to the soldiers and a signal for the people at home."

#### 15. (Cuba-U.S.) Congressional Delegation in Cuba

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung opined: "Never before has there been an endless queue of so many politicians from all over the world in Cuba. With this unmistakable and offensive visitor diplomacy, they have upgraded the communist ruled island state. The old grey men at the top of the state continue to be as unscrupulous as before with respect to human rights, and even a modest democratization may not be in sight, but relations of President Obama with the Castro regime are now turning into a real litmus test for this new era of U.S. foreign policy 'at eye level' with the American nations. The upcoming OAS summit next week will tell whether this tactic will come true and whether Obama gives in to pressure. For the time being, Washington self-confidently prevented Cuba from being invited to Trinidad & Tobago."

Under the headline "Limbering-up Exercise in Washington and Havana," Berliner Zeitung opined: "It is still too early to talk about a thaw, but the ice is beginning to melt. It is very likely that President Obama will announce a new U.S. policy towards Cuba at the OAS summit in Trinidad & Tobago. Nothing serves the policy in Cuba more than the economic boycott by the imperialist enemy. However, a new generation of Cubans has grown up in Miami that is less ideological, less embittered, calculates in a more sober way, wants to invest in Cuba, and finds an open ear with President Obama. Last year, Cuba imported agricultural products from the U.S. worth 750 million dollars. It is time to make a virtue out of the necessity: bring about change through trade."

"Obama's Ostpolitik," is the headline in die tageszeitung. It opined: "Only a few weeks after President Obama took office, a thaw has developed between the United States and Cuba. Obama began his policy of change with measures that reminds us of Willy Brandt's policy towards the GDR in the 1970s. The question is whether the new 'Ostpolitik' will result in the desired opening in Havana. Thus far, Ral Castro has reacted with the same reflexes as his larger brother Fidel to criticism and pressure for reforms from its own ranks. But Cuba's population will not understand if Ral shows a cold shoulder to Obama's advances."

#### 16. Secretary Gates on Pentagon Budget

ARD-TV's Tagesthemen stated that "the efforts to create a more intelligent army will be one of Obama's great battlefields in the coming weeks." Frankfurter Rundschau commented: "From the Pentagon's point of view, it might make sense to readjust the U.S. forces to meet new challenges.... However, the U.S is stuck in the worst economic crisis in decades. The country must be modernized...

Obama wants to reduce the increase by simply balancing the inflation rate. This is a cautious start. However, the 'yes we can-man' in the White House shuns the debate over whether America can still afford unprecedented arms programs."

#### 17. South Africa

According to Sueddeutsche Zeitung, "Jacob Zuma's triumph is the symptom of a threatening development, which is weakening the foundation of the young South African democracy. This nurtures the suspicion that leading ANC politicians misuse the institutions of the state as a weapon for their own political struggle. They manipulate for their own use, and the protection of the constitution is only of secondary importance. If the ANC that is dominated by Zuma is now strangling the justice authorities, the liberators of South Africa are betraying their own goals for which they fought so hard. A free state needs prosecutors and judges who are not afraid

of political interference. Instead of protecting free justice authorities, the ANC is now undermining the foundations of the state. Thus must scare every South African."

#### 18. Fujimori Trial in Peru

Sueddeutsche Zeitung editorialized: "Latin America is making progress to come to terms with its past. The Peruvian verdict against former president Fujimori is a triumph of human rights. It is the first time that a court in the hemisphere declared a former elected state leader guilty. Chile failed with this task, but Peru has now set an example. The justice authorities must now continue to do their job as independently as possible, because the matter has by no means been clarified."

#### 19. Guantanamo

Sueddeutsche Zeitung deals with the report of the International Committee of the Red Cross on torture in Guantanamo and wrote: "The medical assistants of torture are agents of a medicine without humanity. They have turned into torturers themselves, who have offered their profession for the service of torture, thus nurturing the dangerous illusion that there is a good torture, namely the one in which the victim does not die but only suffers. The report of the International Red Cross is illustrating this in a depressing way. It is the perverse attempt of humanizing inhumanity. Now from CIA prisons another thing has been revealed: not only people, but the rule of law and medical ethics are also casualties of the Twin Towers."

#### 10. Nuclear Weapons in Germany

Berliner Zeitung analyzed the deployment of tactical nukes in Germany: "At least small actions must follow Obama's great announcements. The German government can help here. The U.S. can do without the few remaining nuclear weapons in Germany.... Such a demand of the German Chancellor Merkel would only be symbolic. However, it would demonstrate that the whole German government stands behind Obama's utopia."

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